

Guidelines

for the implementation of curricula for the **Doctorate of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (Dr.nat.techn.)** and the **Doctorate of Social and Economic Sciences (Dr.rer.soc.oec.)** at the **University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna**, valid as of 1 October 2016.

§2

300 ECTS credits must be earned in one or more standard higher education programmes as a prerequisite for admission to doctoral studies at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. At least an MSc degree or equivalent is required and the dissertation project topic must fall within one of the BOKU research areas.

In the absence of full equivalence, admission may be subject to additional examinations up to a maximum of 60 ECTS credits. These examinations must be taken during the doctoral programme in addition to the viva voce examination.

§3 (3)

The doctoral programme is to be understood as a planned project meant for presentation to the public. Registration of the dissertation ensures legal security for all participants.

Registration takes the form of an agreement between the supervisor and the student with a form provided by Study Services and submitted to the Dean of Studies for approval. Registration must contain the following information listed in the curriculum:

- Dissertation topic (joint proposal of supervisor and student; the dissertation language may be German or English).
- Nomination of a supervisor with relevant full teaching authorisation (venia docendi) - the supervisors of doctoral programmes in the social and economic sciences at BOKU must have full teaching authorisation (venia docendi) in the social sciences.

This agreement must be accompanied by a synopsis (approx. 5 pages) approved by the supervisor that contains the following:

- Working title of the dissertation project and content description, research objective, research questions and hypotheses, general overview of the state of knowledge, description of the planned methods, important literature.
- Schedule and work plan
- Advisory team:

The advisory team must consist of at least 3 members. In addition to the supervisor, the advisory team must include at least one university teacher with a venia docendi qualification. At least 3 members of the advisory team must have a doctorate relevant to the subject and monitor the progress of the student. Members of the advisory team may be selected as reviewers and members of the dissertation defence committee. Students must inform their advisory teams in writing of the progress of their work once a year. For this purpose, documentation must be prepared (e.g. comments by the advisory team or individual members, etc.), which must be kept in record by the student to be submitted upon request. A copy must be given to the supervisor.

- Resource plan on the use of infrastructure, materials, any necessary remuneration,

and anything else required for the dissertation project. The resource plan must be approved by the head of the respective department and institute.

- Proposal for doctoral courses to be attended (see §5 (1)) selected in consultation with the supervisor.

The Dean of Studies can refuse the dissertation project, specifically the topic, the list of courses and the supervisor, within four months of receipt by Study Services by giving notice; otherwise the project is considered to be accepted.

Students are able to change their supervisor and topic. In this case, the dissertation project must be re-registered and a statement obtained from the previous supervisor must be submitted. This statement must be submitted within 6 weeks. The Dean of Studies must appoint a new supervisor within four months with notice.

The registration form for the doctoral programme is available on BOKU's website.

§5 (1) and (3)

Students must apply for the courses to be attended for the first part of the viva voce examination with the consent of their supervisor when registering their dissertation project. The courses must be reviewed by the study programme coordinator and prescribed by the Dean of Studies. The course "Principles and challenges of research in socio-economics, natural resources and life sciences" is mandatory. The examinations may only be taken when valid notice has been issued.

In certain justified cases, the course list can be changed up until submission of the dissertation, though no examinations for changed courses may be taken before the approval of the Dean of Studies has been obtained.

Students may apply for courses incrementally (=partial course determination). Students may choose to take more than 20 ECTS credits but their choice is binding once determined.

The following rules must be observed when selecting courses:

- Courses must be related to the dissertation topic.
- Courses can be selected from those offered at any Austrian or foreign universities as long as a certificate can be issued. For courses taken at educational institutions other than BOKU, it is necessary to verify beforehand whether such a certificate (with assessment, ECTS credits and date) can in fact be issued (e.g. admission requirements, limited capacity).
- No courses for Bachelor's studies
- Courses assigned to both Bachelor's and Master's studies, or those assigned to no particular level, are permissible.
- No courses at universities of applied sciences
- No more than 10 ECTS credits with the supervisor
- No more than 2 ECTS credits as doctoral seminar
- No language courses including technical languages, no excursions, no "introduction to scientific work", no exclusive tutorials or similar.
- Courses for the acquisition of soft skills are allowed for up to a maximum of 3 ECTS credits

For courses at universities or post-secondary educational institutions outside BOKU, the Dean of Studies must verify whether the ECTS credits awarded correspond to the workload (25 hours per 1 ECTS credit).

Students whose supervisors are not affiliated with BOKU (i.e. persons who have not acquired full teaching authorisation at BOKU and who are not employed by BOKU) must complete at least 10 ECTS credits at BOKU.

The following applies to subsequent changes to courses:

- Changes must be justified, e.g. the course is no longer offered, the dissertation project has changed such that another course is more relevant to the topic, or a visiting or newly appointed professor is offering a one-time course that fits with the dissertation topic.
- No negative certificate of achievement has been issued for the course to be changed.
- The course to be replaced has not been yet completed.

Eligibility of publications for examinations:

If equivalence is given, non-university research projects, in particular publications, are to be recognised on application by the student as examinations for a course included in the approved individual curriculum. The extent of such recognition may not exceed 5 ECTS credits, and the publications in question may not be part of a cumulative dissertation. The course instructor must confirm the equivalence of a publication with the course.

§6 (1)

With their supervisor's consent, students may submit as a dissertation, instead of a work dedicated to a specific topic ("monograph"), several previously published works that are related to a specific subject ("cumulative dissertation") and meet the requirements described below. In this case, a summary presentation of the work (framework paper) must be attached to the work, in which the work's relevance to a specific research topic, the method, as well as the scientific and, if applicable, practical relevance of the work are explained. The Dean of Studies is responsible for reviewing the subject matter to determine whether a monograph or a cumulative dissertation is admissible.

Provisions concerning monographs:

A monograph is a comprehensive and complete treatise on a single subject. A monograph comprises an introduction with a definition of the topic, a derivation of research questions and hypotheses, a presentation of the theoretical and methodological framework, a results section, discussion and conclusions, a summary, and a list of literature and sources. A monograph may not include chapters that have the character of an independent journal article.

Provisions concerning cumulative dissertations for students beginning their studies up to and including summer semester 2019:

The minimum requirement for a cumulative dissertation consists of two publications as first author or "equally contributing author" (for interdisciplinary work) in "Journals with Impact Factor", as well as a framework paper.

The papers must at least be "accepted with minor revisions", and the revised version is to be included in the dissertation.

Provisions concerning cumulative dissertations for students beginning their studies in winter semester 2019/20 and after:

Cumulative dissertations must correspond in their entirety to a monograph in terms of their scientific contribution. Publications must be academically relevant and connected by an overarching question that corresponds with the dissertation topic.

The minimum requirement for a cumulative dissertation consists of at least two publications as first author in journals listed in "Web of Science" or "SCImago", as well as a framework paper. Both papers must be accepted for publication. An equal contribution is allowed for one of the two publications.

The framework paper serves to present the scientific questions dealt with in context, to document the applied methods and/or the data basis in detail if necessary, and to classify the publications submitted into topics. It may also contain unpublished data. All publications included in the dissertation must be listed with the author's name, title, details of the processing status and details of the student's own contribution in a declaration of authorship.

The reviewers must assess whether the conditions for a cumulative dissertation have been met; a corresponding statement must be included in the assessment.

A total of two hard bound copies with names on the spine and a digital version must be submitted to Study Services. One bound copy each is forwarded to the National Library and to the University Library (cf. Homepage Study Services).

Students can apply with Study Services to have their dissertation blocked for a period of up to five years by filling out a form and submitting their reasons to Study Services. This will be communicated to the library which will then suspend access and borrowing.

§6 (5)

When the dissertation is submitted, students can propose a desired date for the second part of the viva voce examination. The Dean of Studies must be given sufficient time to 1. obtain expert opinions and 2. set up a dissertation defence committee. The student is entitled to nominate reviewers.

§6 (6)

The reviewers must not be supervisors or co-authors, but may be part of the advisory team. At least one reviewer must not be affiliated with BOKU.

Supervisors can, however, be members of the dissertation defence committee.

§7 (1)

If the dissertation is assessed positively (written review with proposed mark for which the reviewers have a maximum of two months), the Dean of Studies, taking into account the student's wishes, sets a date and assembles a dissertation defence committee for the second part of the viva voce examination.

Once the reviews have been received, a date for the dissertation defence is set by Study Services based on the student's proposal.

The reviews will be made available to the entire dissertation defence committee and the student a week before the date of the dissertation defence.

§7 (2)

The second part of the viva voce examination is a dissertation defence to be carried out in German or in English.

The dissertation defence committee consists of at least two members with full teaching

authorisation or equivalent qualification as well as a chairperson with a *venia docendi*. Students have the right to nominate defence committee members. The supervisor may be a defence committee member, but not a reviewer. At least one member of the dissertation defence committee must belong to a department that is not the same as the supervisor's or come from outside the university.

The dissertation defence is public and an audience is welcome. Admission can be limited, if necessary, to a number of people corresponding with the room size.

As a rule, the duration should not exceed 90 minutes and should consist of:

- presentation of the dissertation: approx. 30 minutes

and

- defence of the dissertation

Every member of the dissertation defence committee must be present for the whole time.

All members of a dissertation defence committee are entitled to ask the student questions. Once all of the defence committee's questions have been answered, additional questions from the audience may be asked within the set time limits.

Thus, the examination regulations, which are required in every curriculum, are not listed as a separate paragraph, but are composed of paragraphs 3 to 7 and are explained by these guidelines.

§7 (3)

The dissertation defence committee assesses the dissertation defence with regard to the following aspects:

- Presentation skills
- Ability to explain one's own work
- Expertise in the core subject
- Expertise in related subjects
- Ability to answer questions
- Ability to defend positions
- Discussion of notes and points of criticism from the assessment

§7 (4)

The overall assessment consists of the marking of the dissertation defence (25%), the dissertation (50%) and the first part of the viva voce examination (25%). All parts must be successfully completed.

§7 (5)

The viva voce examination has been "passed" if each part (see § 7 (4)) is positively assessed. Otherwise the viva voce examination will be marked as "failed".

After the overall assessment has been announced, the completed assessment form will be forwarded to Study Services.

§8

The German names for the BOKU doctoral programmes are as follows:

- Doctoral studies of Natural Resources and Life Sciences = Doktoratsstudium der

Bodenkultur

- Doctoral studies of Social and Economic Sciences = Doktoratsstudium der Sozial- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften

Translation of the academic degree is not permitted.

1 October 2019